

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 NEA-10 PM-09 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 L-03

SCA-01 CU-04 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0086

INFO AMEMBASSY TUNIS

S E C R E T TRIPOLI 0653

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR LY

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH FONMIN OFFICIAL

1. EMBOFF CALLED ON AMERICAN DESK OFFICER AL- TIR
17 MAY TO TURN OVER COPY OF SECRETARY'S REPORT ON
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AND DISCUSSED SEVERAL SEPARATE ITEMS.
EMBOFF SAID HAD INTENDED PROTEST QADHAFI AND PRESS
TREATMENT OF ALLEGED USG INVOLVEMENT IN ISRAELI RAID
IN BEIRUT BUT NOTICED AMBIVALENT PLACEMENT IN LOCAL
PRESS STATING THE US DENIED COMPLICITY. SAID WHILE
THOROUGH READING INDICATES USG STILL IMPLICATED,
AT LEAST PLEASED THAT STATEMENT OF USG DENIAL SAW
PRINT.

2. EMBOFF NOTED HIS PERSONAL CONCERN OVER APPARENT QADHAFI
CONFUSION CONCERNING " AMERICAN AIRCRAFT CARRIER" JUST
OFF LIBYAN COAST. SAID WHILE SAW NO REASON DEBATE
DETAILS, WHICH EMBOFF STATED DID NOT HAVE, WISHED
RECORD PERSONAL VIEW THAT THERE WOULD APPEAR TO BE
TWO DIFFERENT DEFINITIONS OF WHAT CONSTITUTES THE
HIGH SEAS. SUGGESTED AL- TIR MIGHT POINT OUT USEFUL-
NESS OF A DIALOGUE THIS SUBJECT RATHER THAN NEAR-
PUBLIC EXCHANGE OF CHARGES AND REJECTED COUNTER- CHARGES.
AL- TIR MADE INTERESTING POINT, WHICH PROBABLY REFLECTS
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AT LEAST LIBYAN MIN FOREIGN AFFAIRS THINKING, WHEN HE NOTED QADHAFI IS NOT DISCUSSING TERRITORIAL WATERS AS MUCH AS AMERICAN INTERFERENCE WITH LIBYAN TRAINING FLIGHTS. EMBOFF NOTED HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT TRAINING AREA IS CLEARLY DEFINED AS A " DANGER ZONE" OFF LIBYAN COAST IN WHICH OTHER PLANES FLY AT THEIR OWN RISK. THE REMAINDER OF MEDITERRANEAN, EXCLUDING PORTIONS CLOSE TO VARIOUS SHORE LINES, IS INTERNATIONAL AIR SPACE AND WATERS, AS FAR AS EMBOFF KNOWS. NOTED INCIDENT SUCH AS 21 MARCH FIRING ON AMERICAN AIRCRAFT, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER DIPLOMATIC NOTES ACCEPTED OR REJECTED, IS A VERY DANGEROUS PRACTICE. AL- TIR POINTED OUT LIBYAN PROBLEM WITH ISRAEL, ADMITTING THAT LIBYANS ALMOST PARANOID ABOUT POSSIBLE ISRAELI RAID, AND INDICATED INTERCEPTION OF ISRAELI AIRCRAFT AT THE 12- MILE LIMIT WOULD BE TOO LATE TO STOP AN ATTACK. EMBOFF STATED UNDERSTOOD THE CONCERN. ADDED THAT LIBYAN PROBLEM IS ONE OF IDENTIFICATION, NOT CARELESS INTERCEPTION; STRESSED USG HAS NO WISH PROVOKE LIBYA AND HAS DONE NOTHING TO DO SO. ADDED THOUGHT, WHICH STRUCK AL- TIR AS NEW, THAT USG PLANES HAVE TO WATCH FOR FLEET IN MED. AT SAME TIME NOTED INTERNATIONAL AIR SPACE IS PRECISELY THAT AND INTERFERENCE IN FREE TRANSIT OF SUCH AIR SPACE COULD NOT BE TAKEN LIGHTLY. AL- TIR APPEARED TO AGREE AND WE BELIEVE THAT AT LEAST PART OF CONVERSATION WILL BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF HIS SUPERIORS WITHIN THE MINISTRY, PERHAPS INCLUDING POINT MADE UNOFFICIALLY WITH AL- TIR THAT QADHAFI APPEARED TO BE PLAYING FAST AND LOOSE WITH A VERY DANGEROUS SUBJECT FOR POLITICAL REASONS.

3. CONVERSATION TURNED TO VISAS AND THE ARABIC IN PASSPORTS QUESTION. AL- TIR INDICATED CONCERN THAT STUDENTS NOT RECEIVING VISAS. EMBOFF SAID HE, TOO, WAS CONCERNED BUT THAT SOME STUDENTS HAD RECEIVED VISAS AND WE EXPECTED THAT SINCE LARG HAS MADE EXCEPTIONS TO ITS ENTRY REQUIREMENTS, MORE STUDENTS WOULD PROBABLY BE ISSUED VISAS. AL- TIR THEN NOTED HE HAS SEVERAL PERSONS WORKING FOR HIM IN MINISTRY WHO WISH TO GO TO THE U. S. AS STUDENTS. EMBOFF REPLIED THAT HE DOES NOT KNOW WHAT FINAL RESOLUTION WILL BE; ADDED HOWEVER THAT SINCE LARG COULD NOT SEE

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ITS WAY CLEAR TO CALLING A DIPLOMAT A GUEST OF THE LARG AND TO BE DE FACTO PROVIDED FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT, EMBOFF PERSONALLY HAD NO SYMPATHY WHATSOEVER FOR ANY LARG OFFICIAL WHO FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO GO TO THE U. S. NOTED EXCLUSION OF COUNTRYMAN AND PNG ACTION AGAINST MARTHINSEN, BOTH ENTIRELY UNCALLED FOR IN EMBOFF'S OPINION. FURTHER, SAID THAT WHILE

EMBOFF IS RESIGNED TO STAYING IN LAR WITHOUT BREAK AS LONG AS NECESSARY, WOULD BE INCENSED SHOULD LIBYAN OFFICIALS OBTAIN VISAS TO THE U. S. WHILE EMBOFF HIMSELF UNABLE LEAVE FOR A DAY. THERE FOLLOWED A DISCUSSION OF RATIONALE AND LEGALITY INVOLVED IN USG REFUSAL PRINT ARABIC IN ITS PASSPORTS. THE DETAILS MATTER NOT. THERE IS NO DOUBT IN OUR MIND, HOWEVER, THAT AL- TIR LEFT THE CONVERSATION KNOWING THAT AT LEAST ONE EMBOFF FELT UNSYMPATHETIC TO LIBYAN FUNCTIONARIES "HARDSHIP".

4. COMMENT: ALL OF THE ABOVE TOOK PLACE IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF FRANK EXCHANGE ON BOTH SIDES. WHILE AL- TIR CARRIES NEXT TO NO WEIGHT IN THE LARG DECISION- MAKING PROCESSES, BELIEVE IT IS USEFUL TO OBTAIN FROM HIM WHAT AT LEAST MINISTRY PERSONNEL ARE SAYING AND THINKING AND AT SAME TIME TO PASS THROUGH HIM "UNOFFICIAL AND PERSON" VIEWS AND THEREBY HOPE- FULLY PROVIDING LARG A WINDOW ON SOME USG THINKING.

5. AL- TIR WAS EDUCATED IN THE US AND THEREFORE IS NOT SURPRISED BY AN APPARENTLY FRANK EXCHANGE. HE GIVES AS WELL AS HE TAKES AND, EXCEPT ON THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE, IS NOT SENSITIVE TO CRITICISM OF LARG ACTIONS.
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